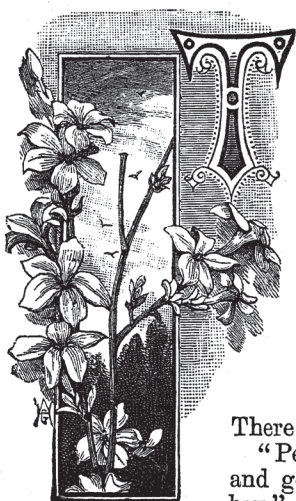




## "Expelled!"

By FRED. WHISHAW, *Author of "The New Master," etc.*



HE trouble began one day when one of young "Alice" Attley's friends desired to borrow two-and-sixpence from Alice, and the latter—having consented—went to his box for the money, but found his purse as empty as the interior of a starved mouse.

"Hullo!" said Alice, "how rum! I'm sure I had seven-and-six left, and the thing's empty.

There were three half-crowns."

"Perhaps they've slipped out, and got among the things in the box," said the would-be borrower faintly; for he felt that his lot were hard indeed should this half-crown, so nearly won, escape him thus at the last moment.

But, though everything the box contained was turned out and shaken, and carefully examined, the three half-crowns were distinctly and decidedly not at home.

"Are you sure you had 'em?" asked the borrower; and it was noticeable that the tone of his voice was wanting in the affability and almost deference which had distinguished it while the half-crown was still presumably a negotiable quantity.

"Certain," said Alice.

At this Smith disappeared, whistling a sad tune in a minor key, and with both hands dejectedly crammed into his pockets; for Smith felt that fate had played him a shabby trick, and that he had a grievance against things in general.

Alice did not tell Mr. Rhodes, the housemaster, of his loss, but he did tell the prefects—Harrington, Billy Jones, and Henderson. Harrington and Henderson were inclined to look incredulously upon Alice's tale of loss. He had probably spent or lent the money, they said, for he was "an improvident little ass, and always had far more cash than was good for him." This was true, though Alice insisted upon it that he had neither spent nor lent the money on this occasion.

Billy Jones, however, the most popular prefect in

the house; a member of the school eleven and football fifteen; winner of the steeple-chase, and several other races at last year's sports, and a favourite with both boys and masters—Billy Jones took a more serious view of the matter. He drew Alice into his study, and questioned him carefully; had he closed his box and locked it? Alice was sure he had done so. Did Alice suspect anybody? Oh, no; Alice had not the slightest idea what had become of his money. Did Alice expect further remittances? Yes, Alice hoped to receive a sovereign or two on his twelfth birthday—the thirteenth of this very month—to-day being the eighth.

"Well, keep your box carefully locked this time," said Billy Jones, "and we'll see whether we can find you this money of yours meanwhile, though—as a matter of fact—I don't much think you'll ever see it again. Are you unhappy about it?"

"Oh, no," said Alice, "not a bit; I can get on well enough without tin till the thirteenth; there's a good lot of grub left in my last hamper, besides; so I'd rather there wasn't a row made about this."

"Well," said Jones kindly, "here's a shilling for you to go on with; you can pay me back when you are well-to-do again. Now be off, and keep your box safely locked; we won't make a row about this for the present."

But a couple of days later the house was thrown into a disagreeable state of uncomfortable suspense and anxiety by the discovery of a second theft. Cadley, commonly called "the miser," an exceedingly unpopular boy, and one who undoubtedly deserved his nickname, by reason of his hoarding and stingy nature—for he had never been known to spend a farthing on anyone else, and as little as possible on himself; this Cadley came howling and blubbing into breakfast one morning, holding in his hand an empty tin box.

"What's up with you, miser?" said some one.

"I've been robbed; I've been robbed!" shrieked Cadley, half mad with despair and rage. "My money!—every farthing of it gone—four pound, thirteen, and eight!"

The miser looked so ridiculously and delightfully frantic with rage, that his behaviour would have been amusing, if the communication he had made had not been so important and appalling. No one was sorry